



# ANNUAL REVIEW

**2021**

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**Serving animals and people in  
Scotland in 2021**



## Introduction from our Chair

2021 marked my final full year as Chair of the Scottish SPCA. It has been a genuine privilege to serve on the Board of this iconic charity, which I believe to be a vital part of Scottish society.

It has been a turbulent period, but one which has made us all the more robust and I have a real enthusiasm for the foundations which have been laid to build upon. We have responded quickly to the emerging challenges and issues we've faced, and we've tried to innovate whilst doing so.

What has been evident to me throughout my time as Chair is the dedication of the people who work for us. And not just for



Ronnie Soutar  
Chair

every individual animal they care for, but the cause of animal welfare as a whole. Such passion is contagious, and I believe that's why we are held in such high regard by not only regular supporters but the overwhelming majority of people in Scotland.

“

Though the final two years of my term as Chair have been different in ways I could never have imagined, I think this Review highlights what a wonderful job we have done in navigating through it.

”



## Our highlights in 2021

### January

We published data showing the number of people contacting us to give up animals they could no longer care for had more than doubled as lockdown restrictions eased in the second half of 2020.

With a 103% increase in calls to give up dogs and a 151% rise in calls to relinquish cats, we had to provide advice and support to hundreds of pet owners to help them

work on the issues they were having. A number of factors, such as returning to work and rising vet costs, were driving the calls.

Thankfully, we did not see a rise in abandonments. Calling us when people think they may have to give up their pet is absolutely the right thing to do. We are here for people and pets in crisis.

## February

We had to respond to an 825% rise in the number of birds arriving at our rescue and rehoming centres compared to February 2020.

Due to the threat of bird flu, we saw an increase in abandonments and a 280% increase in calls to our animal helpline about the deadly disease.

Throughout the year, we continued to respond to reports of sick birds with suspected bird flu and work with DEFRA and other agencies to manage the situation.



## March



We launched 'Better for Animals', our manifesto for the 2021 Scottish Parliamentary election. We urged political parties to include animal welfare in their own manifestos, and four of the largest parties featured some of our calls. Over 11,000 Scots signed a petition supporting our manifesto, and a poll showed majority support for all of our demands.

Parties included commitments to look at the licensing of beaver releases in Scotland, to close loopholes around fox hunting, to review the use of shock collars on dogs and to research the viability of a national register for animal cruelty offenders

## April

We received formal accreditation as a Living Wage employer. Animal welfare is a discipline which requires skill, knowledge and mental fortitude. In recognition of this, we committed to join over 7,000 other UK organisations in paying everyone who works for us a real Living Wage.

## May



Inspector Mark Greener  
and Jake the dog



The story of Jake, a border collie who was buried alive, captured the hearts of animal lovers across Scotland.

Poor Jake was left for dead under a pile of rocks in the Highlands. A group of walkers heard his weak whines, and managed to find him. Our inspector whisked him to the local vet, and despite multiple injuries to his head and face, incredibly he survived the night.

From there, Jake underwent six weeks of veterinary care and treatment, including the removal of an eye, to get him back on his feet. Jake was then fostered by one of our team, who has since permanently adopted him.

Jake's story underlined our commitment to giving every animal a chance.

## June



Our Special Investigations Unit tackle serious animal abuse. This means investigating the puppy trade and animal fighting.

We secured a conviction for a notorious animal fighter named Anthony Holloway, who had forced his dogs to take part in brutal fights with badgers and circulated videos. We intercepted Holloway at Cairnryan port as he returned from a badger baiting trip in Ireland.

Animal fighting remains a scourge across Scotland. People with no empathy for their own pets and wildlife are taking part in it nationwide. We are committed to bringing these people to justice.

## July



Kirsteen Campbell, Ash Regan MSP, Gilly Mendes Ferreira and Jackie Massie from Rock Trust

With the support of Ash Regan MSP, the Minister for Community Safety in Scotland, we started raising awareness of the challenges facing people with pets in rented accommodation.

Alongside Ms. Regan and the youth homelessness charity Rock Trust, we

kick-started 'Pets and Tenants Together' to highlight the lack of support and challenges pet-owners face in finding a home through both public and private landlords. Many people opt to become homeless rather than giving up their pet. We don't think they should be put in that position in the first place – and 77% of Scots agreed.

## August

August 2021 marked 30 years since the introduction of The Dangerous Dogs Act. The Act means it is illegal to own four types of dog in the UK, but it has proven ineffective in reducing dog attacks and judges animals on their appearance.

Sometimes, we seize animals which have characteristics in common with the breed and are legally bound to put them to sleep, regardless of their temperament and behaviour. That's why we launched 'No Bad Breed', a campaign calling for a review of the legislation and to stop labelling breeds dangerous because of how they look. Instead, judge a dog by their temperament and behaviour and treat all breeds the same.

## September

We had cause for celebration as a number of new legislative changes came into effect, adding to the Animals and Wildlife (Scotland) Act 2020. The changes will improve the lives of animals in Scotland.

Plus, the law changed after years of campaigning led by us to allow animals involved in legal proceedings to be rehomed after just three weeks – which could reduce the average time they spend in our care by hundreds of days.

Licensing of animal sanctuaries was also introduced, meaning standards of rescue centres across Scotland should improve in the next few years.



Over 20,000 people backed our calls to scrap the Act, which also does nothing to protect or support victims of dog attacks.

We advocated hard for all of these changes for several years, highlighting the emotional cost to people and animals and the financial cost to us as a charity.



It was immensely rewarding to see these changes come into force and it could reduce the average days in care for animals involved in court cases by 90%.

## October

We made headlines around the world after releasing a rare arctic seal on Shetland.

The seal, named Hispi, was less than eight weeks old, lethargic and injured when rescued at Cove Bay Harbour in late August. After a dedicated programme of care at our National Wildlife Rescue Centre, a plane took Hispi and members of our team to Shetland to release him as far North as we could.

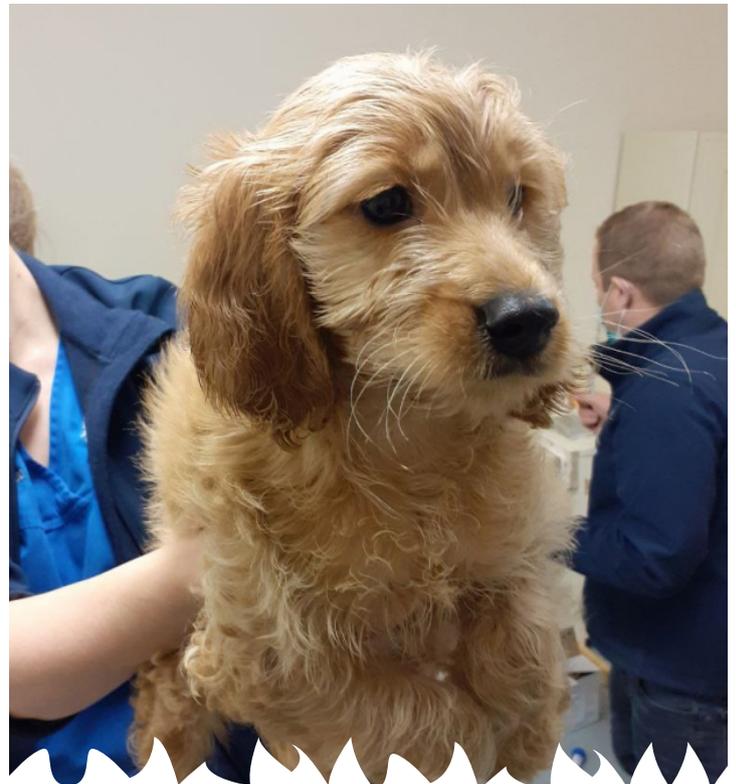
Prior to Hispi, there had been less than 30 recorded sightings of his species of seal in the UK over the past century.



## November

Demand for puppies rocketed throughout the pandemic. Despicable breeders and dealers, who put profit before welfare, exploited this. Our Chief Superintendent Mike Flynn described the situation in 2021 as the worst he had ever seen.

After noting a 34% increase in calls to our Animal Helpline about such dealers in a year, we launched 'Keep Me Off Your Xmas List' to urge the public not to buy a puppy as a gift. We seized a number of pups from unscrupulous dealers during the campaign, and worked with the BBC to produce a Spotlight documentary highlighting the influx of these dogs from Ireland.





## December

After successfully sending over 250 animals on emergency foster throughout COVID-19 lockdowns, we launched a pilot scheme for foster homes. Based out of our Dunbartonshire centre, we developed bespoke training for members of the public interested in providing a temporary home for a dog or cat.

Fostering is a fantastic way to speed up the rehoming process, as a loving home is a less stressful environment for an animal than a busy rescue centre. As part of our ongoing commitment to improving the quality of care we give animals, we anticipate fostering will expand in 2022 and beyond.





**154,470**

Calls to  
**Animal helpline**



**87,742**

reports of animals  
**in need** responded to

**66,728**

callers given  
**help and support**  
over the phone



**133**



visits to farms  
to carry out  
**assurance checks**

## Advise, rescue and enforce

**Our animal helpline and inspectorate were busier than pre-pandemic levels in 2021. Call volumes and reports of animals were higher than in 2019 and 2020.**

Always looking to improve, we started using what3words, the geolocation service, to assist callers to our animal helpline in providing an accurate location for animals. This allowed us to speed up how quickly we could respond to a report and find the injured animal.

Helping people and pets in crisis is a key part of our work. As always, we encountered thousands of people who just needed a helping hand and some constructive advice. Our animal helpline provided a vital crutch for people, and our inspectors and animal rescue officers were ever-present in communities the length and breadth of the country.

That being said, we do proudly enforce the law and we continued to do so in situations where animals had suffered. The court system has slowed due to the build-up of cases during the pandemic, but that

has not stopped us reporting abusers to the Procurator Fiscal when there's strong evidence of it. We secured 36 prosecutions in 2021, for the neglect or abuse of multiple species including dogs, cats, horses and more.

Serious animal welfare abuse remained a priority, and we took animal fighters, puppy dealers, ear croppers and other criminals to task. Our special investigations unit had over 900 active investigations throughout the year.

The Assurance Schemes we support with Quality Meat Scotland gathered momentum in 2021 thanks to restrictions easing, and we were able to visit dozens of farms to ensure high welfare standards were in place for farmed animals.

Beyond this work, we continued to support farmers on an individual level who were facing challenges to manage and look after their animals. We also partnered with RSABI to provide support to farmers facing difficult times.

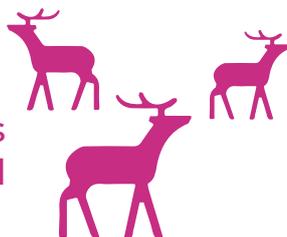


**3,101**  
Cared for  
and rehomed



animals out  
on foster

**2,769**  
wild animals  
treated and released



# Rehome, rehabilitate and release

The number of animals arriving into our care at rescue and rehoming centres fell for the second year in succession, with 4,915 admitted in total. Whilst this number was down, the average amount of time animals spent in our care increased substantially. This was due to a perfect storm of COVID-19 restrictions and a build-up of court cases. We had to continue to seize animals where appropriate to remove them from situations where their welfare was at risk or compromised.

Over 1,400 were part of legal proceedings, a significant volume who in future will benefit from the new legislative changes allowing for speedier rehoming of such animals. Our centres were at capacity for large parts of the year.

We did mitigate this where possible through the introduction of further enhancements to our online rehoming service and fostering animals where possible before launching a formal pilot scheme in December.

We developed partnerships with other charities, including Dogs Trust, Blue Cross and Cats Protection, who assisted by taking animals from our care. As an agency with legal powers, we have the power to

seize animals when other animal welfare organisations don't and our thanks go to our partners for their support.

A lot of animals in our care required significant rehabilitative support, and our incredible animal care teams worked with our veterinary department tirelessly to provide this. We continued to develop enrichment activities for all species in our care to improve the quality of care we provide.

At our National Wildlife Rescue Centre, the volume of arrivals fell for the second year in succession, in part down to improved advice given via our external channels and helpline and the efforts of our inspectors and animal rescue officers to treat animals in the field where possible. 90% of endangered land mammals we cared for were successfully rehabilitated, highlighting the critical role we play in protecting at-risk species.

Though arrivals were down, the needs of those coming to the centre were more complex given the increased number of orphans. From squirrels to foxes to badgers, our team put in an astonishing level of effort to rescue and raise orphaned young.



 **ANIMAL WISE**<sup>®</sup>  
SCOTTISH SPCA

**20,861**

people of all ages  
reached through  
Animal WISE



**40**

referrals to the  
expanding  
Animal Guardians  
Programme

**6,050**

people at our virtual  
Vetastic Adventures Event



## Educate and prevent

Newly rebranded as Animal WISE, our education programme continued to be delivered as a hybrid of virtual and face-to-face work.

Demand for school visits was exceedingly high in the final quarter of the year, with many of our education team fully booked to visit pupils we had not been able to see in-person for over 18 months. We saw over 11,000 young people between October and December.

We launched our first-ever Adventure Clubs at three of our centres in July. Throughout the holidays, 60 children benefitted from the extracurricular clubs and connected with nature and learned lots about animal welfare.

Our Animal Guardians programme expanded to cover the west and north-east of Scotland and received 40 new referrals throughout the year. The pioneering programme continued to work with young people who had harmed animals or displayed behaviours which suggested they could harm animals. It remains a foundation of our commitment to getting downstream of animal welfare issues and intervening early.

In partnership with the British Veterinary Association, we ran a virtual event to encourage young people to consider a career in the veterinary or animal welfare sector. Over 6,000 attendees joined the event and heard inspiring talks about the different roles they could train for after school or college.

A key part of our preventative work is advocating for legislative change, and we hosted 17 MSPs and MPs at our centres throughout the year to highlight our work and discuss pressing animal welfare issues and campaigns. One highlight was the move towards introducing tighter regulations of fireworks sale and use, something we have felt is needed for many years.



**£7.5m**

left as gifts in Wills by animal lovers



**48,798**

regular givers providing vital funds to help us care for animals

**9 in 10**

Scots have a favourable view of us



## Raise funds and awareness

Fundraising throughout the pandemic was a challenge for the whole charity sector, and we were humbled by the manner in which animal lovers continued to support us in 2020. Amazingly, this continued in 2021.

Our first major fundraising campaign of the year, Don't Let Animals Suffer, was one of the most successful we've ever run and the response was phenomenal. We also enjoyed some of our most successful challenge events too. Step for Pets, which ran in February, raised over £50,000 in February and generated a virtual community buzz despite lockdown.

Gifts in Wills were critical to funding our services, and 285 amazing individuals ensured their love of animals will live on by leaving a gift in their Will.

We know how much we mean to our supporters, but we wanted our supporters to remember how much they mean to us

too. Building on work which started in 2020, our fundraising team spoke with hundreds of our supporters who were isolated due to COVID-19.

Our brand-building strategy aimed to keep our work front and centre in people's minds. There was a particular focus on the journey animals make in our care, not only the harrowing situations they are found in but the heart-warming recovery they undergo.

We continued to work with partners on key animal welfare issues to shine a brighter light on issues. For example, AirBnB teamed up with us to highlight the use of rented properties by puppy dealers as a front to sell dogs. With their support, we massively amplified the reach of our campaign to disrupt the puppy trade. A big thank you to AirBnB for recognising and tackling this issue with us.



**24,037**  
hours of time  
given by our  
volunteers



**£214,000**  
equivalent value  
of the time given  
by those volunteers

**£100,000**  
investment in improving  
technology infrastructure  
to support new ways  
of working



## Organisational excellence

As part of our commitment to being the best employer of choice, we began paying a real Living Wage in January and received formal accreditation in April. 54% of people working for us benefitted from this commitment.

We kept our people safe and well while they continued to deliver our key services, supporting them with a combination of personalised wellbeing offerings and adapting working practices accordingly. We launched the initial phase of our Leadership Development programme to ensure that our teams continued to feel connected and supported, even when working remotely.

Our colleagues are brilliant at what they do, and also rely on the sterling work of

volunteers to support them. We continued to welcome volunteers across all areas, and by the end of the year benefited from 652 selfless people using their skills and knowledge to help us deliver our services and raise funds.

We adapted quickly to flexible and remote working in 2020, and built on that in 2021 through further investment in tech across our teams and estate. Upgraded internet connectivity, better equipment for inspectors to compile case reports and care teams to conduct online rehoming were just some of the actions taken.



## Looking ahead

As highlighted, we're now busier than we were pre-pandemic. However, COVID-19 continues to disrupt the lives of our supporters and pet owners and the operations of our partners, and therefore pose challenges for us. With a cost-of-living crisis beginning to bite, we anticipate a tough period in the short-term to grow fundraising and provide support to not only animals in our care, but people with pets too.

We have identified **four key areas** of focus for 2022.

# People

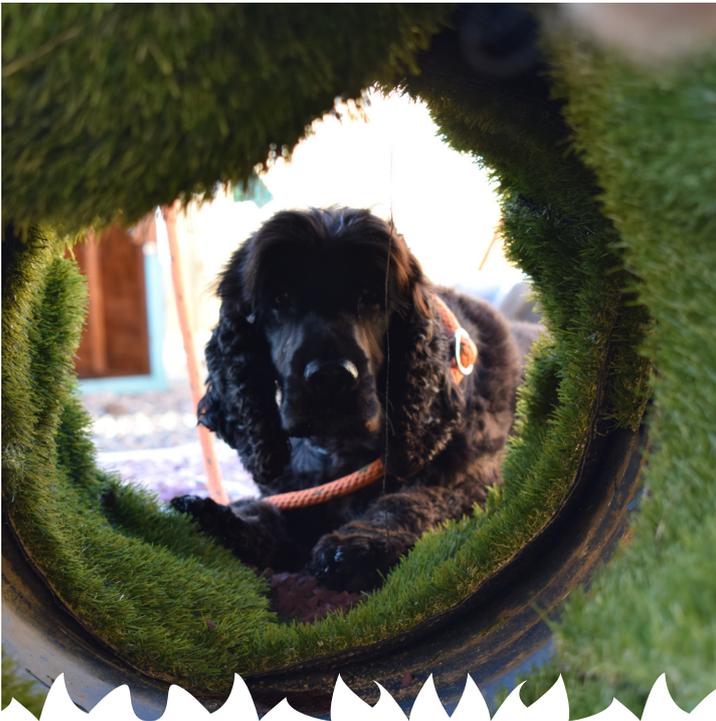
Our people have always worked hard, but this has never been more evident than throughout the pandemic. Demand for our services has grown and we need to grow to meet that demand. Therefore, we're committing to a £920k investment in new roles, particularly at our rescue and rehoming centres and wildlife centre, to ensure we have appropriate staffing levels to provide first-class care for animals. We're also expanding our learning and development provision through dedicated roles to support, in particular, our animal care and inspectorate areas. And, we'll be enhancing our reward and recognition



# Animals

With new legislation in place, the time is right to tackle the issue of average days in care for animals caught up in court cases. A big focus in 2022 will be reducing time spent in a kennel environment. We aim to do this by scaling up our fostering scheme and making use of the new law to rehome animals more quickly.

More broadly, continued improvements to our external advice and engagement with the public and partners should continue to reduce the number of animals arriving in our care.



Our partners in improving animal welfare in Scotland are facing the same challenges we are. We will prioritise effective ways of working and sharing expertise and resource where it makes sense to do so to deliver the best possible service for the people and animals we support.

## Collaborations



Natasha Mackinnon, Gillian Laurie - BEAR Scotland Correspondence Officer.

## Sustainability



We need to ensure we're financially and environmentally sustainable.

This means renewing our commitment to diversifying our income streams, whilst growing and protecting well-established ones. And looking after the wonderful people who donate to us and volunteer with us to enable us to do what we're here for.

Environmentally, it means establishing our credentials for the move towards net-zero. We will launch a dedicated strategy in 2022.

# Our finances



We lead the way in the amount of funding we commit to our frontline services. 81p in every £1 we spend goes directly towards animal welfare. 86.4% of our spend in 2021 was on operating our inspectorate, animal rescue centres and wildlife centre.

## Income

Community Fundraising & Events:	£586,000		3.2%
Trusts:	£135,000		0.7%
Charitable income:	£359,000		2%
Donations:	£1,733,000		9.6%
Gift Aid:	£935,000		5.2%
Corporate:	£81,000		0.4%
Legacies:	£9,039,000		49.9%
Memberships:	£4,120,000		22.8%
Other income:	£1,116,000		6.2%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£18,104,000</b>		<b>(Percentage of total income)</b>

## Expenditure

Inspectorate:	£6,851,000		43%
Animal Rescue & Rehoming Centres:	£6,929,000		43.4%
Fundraising:	£1,375,000		8.6%
Education:	£287,000		1.8%
Other Costs:	£506,000		3.2%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£15,948,000</b>		<b>(Percentage of total expenditure)</b>

Surplus: 2,156,0000

## Our Board Directors

Ronnie Soutar, Chair (until May 2022)

Fiona MacLeod (Chair as of May 2022)

Susan Dunsmuir, Treasurer

Warwick Beresford-Jones

Alan Biggar

Lisa Davidson

Melissa Donald

Susan Johnstone

Carolyn McLeod

Niall Connell (as of May 2022)

Kathy Peebles (until May 2022)

Victoria Simpson (until May 2022)

## Our Current Senior Leadership Team

Kirsteen Campbell, Chief Executive

Mike Flynn, Chief Superintendent

Elaine Lindsay, Head of Rehabilitation Operations

Tom Gatherer, Head of Rescue and Prevention

Anna Hart, Director of People & Culture

Tash MacKinnon, Head of Fundraising

Gilly Mendes Ferreira, Head of Innovation & Strategic Relations

Michael Scobbie, Head of Communications & Marketing

David Webster, Director of Finance & Corporate Services



## Closing remarks from our CEO, Kirsteen Campbell



Given the way the world has been since March 2020, it is easy to confuse the events in 2021 with the previous year. It was business-as-usual for us in the sense that we saw service levels not only return to but race past pre-pandemic levels. For me, this justified the decision to continue operating largely as normal throughout the pandemic. Adapting to life as we now knew it, focusing on keeping our team healthy and safe and innovating our services to continue to serve the animals and people who needed us more than ever.

This Review shows the scale of the job we do in every community in Scotland, be it working with pet owners, advising farmers or assisting injured wildlife. What it also shows is the rich, varied work we are doing to advocate for positive change for animals and educate everyone on their needs. If an animal can live their life without ever

needing our help, that's a true measure of success.

I want to thank my colleagues for their resilience and agility in the face of such demand, and their commitment to our purpose and the animal welfare sector. I do not underestimate the impact of the last two years on our amazing team, and their health, safety and wellbeing is my priority. I would also like to recognise the wide array of partners and agencies with whom we collaborated throughout the year to help pets, wild and farmed animals. We would not have been able to be there for so many animals without them.

Finally, I want to thank our wonderful supporters, whether they help through fundraising, volunteering or spreading the word about the issues we highlight. Without them, none of the fantastic things we achieved in 2021 would have happened.

[www.scottishspca.org/2021](http://www.scottishspca.org/2021)



**SCOTTISH SPCA**  
Scotland's Animal Welfare Charity